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LYONDEL GARDENS

Morgantown, W. Va.

1944-45

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

Why be satisfied with the delphiniums of yesterday?
Grow Lyondels and see the tomorrow today.

Bureau of Plant Industry

Fruit + Vegetable Crops + Diseases

Washington
D.C.



THIS BUSINESS OF SALES TALK

MOST SALES TALKS contain comparatively little truth and altogether too much ballyhoo. At times, gross exaggerations and bald falsehoods have studded the delphinium sales talk like the quills on the back of porcupine; and yet the gardening public does not seem to learn its lesson. Consider, if you please, this matter of spike architecture: English hybridizers took it from the French and developed it to perfection, so that even some fifteen years ago they had those very long spikes we dream about; the low starting habit; the broad pyramidal types; the infinitely graceful spiral forms; the columnar spikes; the whip-like, wind resistant sorts; the loose and the compact varieties; the ideal form and placement of flowers, and the resistant habit whereby the sepals kept on clinging to the seedpods long after the top-most flowers had opened. They had the tall growing types and the short growing types, and they had delphiniums that tolerated the coldest of winters. We have not materially improved, and I doubt if we will ever improve these qualities. And yet, to hear some people ballyhoo, one would think that the English hybridizers were mere pikers. Enormous advances have been made in this country, to be sure, but not in the architecture of the spike. For instance, white delphinium hybrids of good quality were first introduced by Mr. Charles Barber; the first significant advances in the quality of these whites were made by Mr. Frank Reinelt who also gave us the first blue delphiniums of vigor and quality comparable to others. The Lyondel Gardens pioneered hand pollenized seeds that became the foundation of a new era of high quality delphiniums, available to rich and poor alike. The Lyondel Gardens made available the many self colors varying from soft lavenders to deep orchids and royal purple. The large flowering race of delphiniums with individual flowers measuring from three to as much as four inches across was first distributed by the Lyondel Gardens. Earlier, the Vanderbilt Hybrids had introduced a variety of floral patterns and a brilliancy of colors rarely, if ever, seen in the world of delphiniums. From the Vanderbilt strain came the foundation of floral patterns, of self colors, and of other sparkling, vivid shades that have given the Lyondels their unique place. The architecture of the Lyondel spikes came from the English Hybrids, while other well known and not so well known strains have made and are constantly making their contribution to support my pledge that each current year's Lyondels will be better than all previous ones.

The foregoing, my friends, is my sales talk. I cannot promise you the world of delphinium with a fence around it. My delphiniums will not behave as true perennials in all parts of our country; they will not withstand, if unstaked, the fury of wind-driven rainstorms; they are not immune to root rots and crown rots; they are not all delphinium-virtues and no faults. No one is more keenly aware of their shortcomings than I am. It is not such a simple matter to

breed out undesirable characters and give the world the perfect delphinium as some claim. Talk is cheap; it is performance that counts. So, I bring you delphiniums that have faults; but they have so many good points that you will overlook the bad ones. But if you must have perfect delphiniums, then you have come to the wrong place.

And here is another thing for you to consider: my prices are high; my packets contain fewer seeds than the packets of other breeders and growers; furthermore, my attitude toward my customers is too independent to suit most people. There are other growers of good repute who will furnish you with high quality and large quantity of seeds and plants, and who will follow the policy that the customer is always right. Not I! All this sounds as if I don't care to sell my seeds; I do, only not to every Tom, Dick and Harry. I want only the kind of customer who realizes that while his money may buy my seeds, it cannot pay for them; that the breeder puts too much thought, loving care, planning, dreaming, too many heart-breaking disappointments, too many anxious moments, and too much of his very life into the work that produces those seeds. Such things cannot be paid for. They are the breeder's gift to the gardening public. It will be a privilege to serve the customer who understands and appreciates this fact, to keep on serving him long after the sale is made, and to keep him satisfied regardless of cost.

WHAT DO OTHERS SAY?

In former years I have published a great many excerpts from unsolicited letters written to me by satisfied customers. This year, due to the fact that I wish to give space to cultural directions, only four excerpts are published here.

Bexley, Kent, England, June 7, 1943

The plants from your delphinium seeds are the most magnificent and far in advance of any we have here.—Taylor Nurseries.

Toronto, Canada, Oct. 19, 1943

I consider the Lyondels the finest of all known strains; the colour, the substance and size being far superior to anything shown previously at the Canadian National Exhibition here. They also withstand our cold winters much better than all other strains.—Ernest P. Pegg.

Chicago, Ill., July 14, 1943

One of your dark purple delphiniums grown by me was judged the best single spike in the American Delphinium Society's show at Garfield Park Conservatory. I took 14 prizes in all, 11 of these with delphiniums from your seeds.—E. P. Essley.

Niagara Falls, N. Y., Jan. 2, 1944

Last summer I had my first spike with five feet of flowers, raised from your seed. Was I proud!—Marshall Stewart.

But let us not give all the credit to the Lyondels; the skill of these gentlemen had much to do with their success.

HOW TO GROW DELPHINIUMS

Use florists' flats to start the seeds; the deeper the flat, the better. Fill the flats with sifted soil consisting of two parts of top soil (preferably taken from a place where no flowers or vegetables were grown), and one part of sand; level. Put a pinch of Semesan in the seed packet, shake well, and sow thickly right on the surface of the soil, and in rows. Press the seeds down firmly with a piece of two-by-four, and cover thinly, not deeper than twice the diameter of the seed, with the same soil mixture. Plunge the flat partially in water (well, spring, or rain, not city water) until the moisture works its way to the surface, then place the flat in a sheltered place outdoors where direct sunlight will not touch it, but where there is plenty of diffused light and free circulation of air. Avoid drippings from trees, shrubs, and eaves. Never allow the surface of the soil to dry; avoid overwatering. In about 10 to 15 days the seedlings will be up. CAUTION: do not use woods dirt, wood ashes, domestic peat moss, and manure in the seedbed, and *never, never* use fertilizers. After the seedlings are well up, they may be *gradually* hardened to direct sunlight. Should there be signs of damping-off, water with Semesan solution, one level tablespoonful of Semesan to a gallon of water; repeat if necessary. After the first true leaves appear, the seedlings may be transplanted an inch apart. If the growing season is short, transplanting may be omitted and the seedlings may be wintered right in the flat. Tack wire screen over the flat to keep out rodents and other pests; then, after the first hard freeze, mulch with straw, hay, excelsior, or glass wool. In case of greenhouse sowing, the seedlings should be transplanted at least once before setting them out in their permanent place. Early in the spring, when the seedlings in the outdoor flats begin to push up, remove the mulch, and shortly thereafter transplant the seedlings into bands or pots, allow them to establish themselves, and set them out at the first opportunity. Do not apply lime or fertilizers at this time; they should have been applied the previous fall, or may be applied 6 weeks after the seedlings have been planted in their permanent place. Where summers are very warm and long, a northern exposure should be selected for the permanent planting; this will insure a longer life. In milder climates, however, where summers are cool and short, a full exposure to sun is to be preferred. Keep the plants free from weeds, and the surface soil loose. Mildew may be checked by sulfur; and mites, which may be recognized by the blackened, gnarled appearance of growing tips and buds, by rotenone. There is no remedy against crown and root rots. Plants showing signs of these diseases should be dug up and destroyed without delay, otherwise heavy losses may ensue. When the spikes attain some length, and before they begin to bloom, they should be supported by bamboo canes, one cane successively tied to each spike. After it has finished blooming, the spike should be cut down. Older plants of delphinium do not need winter protection. They should be fertilized with some complete fertilizer at

least twice a year; once in the spring, and again after the first crop of flowers is gone. Smaller quantities of fertilizers applied at more frequent intervals will give excellent results.

SEED OFFERINGS FOR 1944-45

The only thing old about the seeds offered here is the classification of colors; otherwise the seed parents are new and better than those of former years. Only hand-pollenized seeds are sold at the Lyondel Gardens.

PLEASE NOTE: I cannot guarantee that the colors will come true. For instance, light bicolors will produce more light bicolors than any other shade; but there might be dark bicolors, solid colors, and even whites. The same thing applies to all others. It has been my policy to sacrifice uniformity to startling deviations from type; deliberately I keep the Lyondels in a dynamic state of flux; I prefer the unexpected to the monotony of standardized performance.

1. LIGHT BICOLORS. The flowers have light lavender and blue combinations. Particular attention has been paid to the development of luminous, clear colors so rare in this, perhaps the most popular group of delphiniums. Enormous flowers and huge spikes are here.

2. DARK BICOLORS. If I were to point out the most important factor that from the very beginning endeared the Lyondels to the gardening public, it would be the clear tones of the light bicolors, and the sparkling, vivid colors of the dark bicolors with their deep blue and royal purple combinations. Here is a man's color, and the secret love of women. Every year I have endeavored to put more fire in this group, a pagan luminosity that never fails to capture and dazzle the eye. Add to this three inch flowers on long, massive spikes, and you will have something to talk about. Still more brilliant colors this year.

3. SOFT SELF COLORS. When these colors were first introduced, many persons did not believe that they were seeing delphiniums, so unusual were the shades. Soft lavenders, soft lilacs, soft blushes on white background, and smokies of infinite charm came in rapid succession to thrill and to captivate. And the color range was perceptively extended with each passing year; the colors became clearer, the flowers larger, and well formed, beautiful eyes of many colors added their charm to an already irresistible flower.

4. DEEP SELF COLORS. Deep orchids, velvety royal purples, plum purples, bluish purples in solid colors with white eyes for a startling accent, or darker eyes with more subdued combinations are all here. Here are big spikes, big flowers, a rippling luminosity, and a topnotch group of delphiniums to lend distinction to any garden.

5. PURE BLUES. Never before have I offered such blues because never before have I been satisfied with the quality of the blue color or with the size

and habit of the florets. Now I have clearer colors of light and dark blue, a far cry from the blues of former years. The beloved blue is here.

6. WHITES. For many years after the first whites were introduced, no definite advances were made; then things happened in a rush. The tissue-paper substance gave way to the heavy substance of modern whites; the purity of color improved enormously; the flower size crowded past the three inch limit; the spikes became as big and as long as those of other hybrids, and a new standard of excellence was firmly established. Look for my favorite, big whites with honey-colored eyes.

7. MIXTURE OF THE FOREGOING SIX COLORS. Those who can use only one packet, are strongly urged to choose this group. The quality is absolutely the same.

Seeds of the foregoing seven groups will be ready the latter part of July. Make your reservation now if you don't want to be disappointed.

8. THE TOMORROW'S DELPHINIUMS TO-DAY SERIES. The topnotchers blooming for the first time in the fall of 1944 will be the parents of this group. The newest advances in Lyondel Hybrids will be here. No true connoisseur of delphinium can afford to be without this. Offered in mixtures only as I cannot hope to have enough seeds for assorted groups. IMPORTANT: since the parent plants of this group will not bloom before August, the seeds will not be ready before the end of October. Please bear this in mind when ordering.

TERMS

The customer buys my seeds with the understanding that once they leave my hand, my responsibilities end. *I know* that the seeds will germinate if treated properly; if they fail, the fault is not mine. I will not be obliged in any way to make replacements unless it pleases me to do so. If your seeds do not reach you within a reasonable length of time, please let me know at once; if you wait weeks or months, I might not be able to duplicate your order.

PRICES

All seeds are priced at \$2.50 per packet of at least 100 seeds. If you don't secure at least 100 seedlings from each packet, you have done something wrong. Cash must accompany each order; no C. O. D. orders accepted. West Virginia customers should include sales tax. Should there be a federal sales tax, it should be included by everyone.

JOIN THE AMERICAN DELPHINIUM SOCIETY

Keep abreast of the newest developments in the world of delphinium. Stanley Ohala, Secretary, 5406 N. McVickers Avenue, Chicago, Ill. Dues \$2.00 a year.

